THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) The proposed National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) will replace the existing Company Law Board (CLB), the Board of Industrial and Financial Reconstruction (BIFR), and jurisdiction of the High Courts in so far as it relates to the Companies Act. Registration of cooperatives as producer companies will, however, be done by the registrar of Companies.

(b) While the Companies (Second Amendment) Act, 2002, which provides for the setting up of the NCLT, has already been passed by Parliament, the Bill to repeal the Sick Industrial Companies (Special Provisions) Act (under which BIFR has been set up) is under consideration of the Parliament.

Buy back of bonds to settle NPAs

944. DR. AKHILESH DAS: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken a decision to allow banks to buy back their own bonds and to permit them to use the profits that may accrue to write off the bad debts outstanding against big companies, persons and entities; and

(b) if so, the details of the proposal/decision, the rationale and the objective thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI ANANDRAO VITHOBA ADSUL): (a) and (b) Government has bought back high cost relatively illiquid Government of India's dated securities of face value equal to Rs. 14434 crore on July 19, 2003. Four securities were re-issued for equivalent amount (face value). The profits that bank have realized by selling the bonds to the Government are exempted for payment f income tax provided the profits are used for writing off NPAs.

Settlement of Claims

945. SHRI UDAY PRATAP SINGH: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state: